

May 8, 2006

To: MLPA Initiative Baseline Science-Management Panelists
From: Michael DeLapa
Re: Organizational structure and planning process for MLPA Initiative Baseline Science-Management Panel

This memo describes the mission, goals, organizational structure, selection criteria, and schedule for the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative Baseline Science-Management Panel. I want to acknowledge and thank Scott McCreary/CONCUR, Inc. for providing a variety of materials that were seminal in developing this memo.

Mission Statement

The MLPA Initiative Baseline Science-Management Panel is an informal group of scientists convened to develop a prioritized list of baseline data needs for the implementation of monitoring and adaptively managing MPAs within the MLPA Central Coast Study Region.

Panel Goal

By November 30, 2006 develop a prioritized list of baseline data needs for monitoring and adaptively managing MPAs within the MLPA Central Coast Study Region.

To achieve this goal, the panel will strive to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Develop a clear understanding of policy-makers and stakeholders' perspectives and priorities with respect to managing MPAs, recognizing that management priorities guide scientific analyses for this process.
2. Identify and clearly frame key issues related to the application of science to answering MPA management questions, working collaboratively with policy-makers and others in an iterative process.
3. Establish clear criteria and an objective process for prioritizing scientific data collection, including
 - Feasibility - Can the management question be answered?
 - Importance/benefits - If so, is the answer already known (from application of studies elsewhere)? If not, is it important to answer the question in the MLPA Central Coast Study Region?
 - Options - If the question is important, what options exist to answer it (long or short-term monitoring, experiments, modeling, or some combination of these)?
 - Costs - What are the approximate costs associated with the various options?

- Cost/benefit - Given the approximate costs, what are the expected benefits?
 - Among high priority questions, what baseline data are needed?
 - Prioritization - Iterative ordering of baseline data collection options based on relative contribution to providing scientific information that addresses management questions.
4. Complete its work on time and within budget, in collaboration with staff from the MLPA Initiative and the California Department of Fish and Game.

Background

A memorandum of understanding among the California Resources Agency, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF) created the MLPA Initiative, a public-private partnership. RLFF has agreed to fund professional services in support of planning for the next phase of the MLPA Initiative; this phase includes the development of a priority list of baseline data needs to assist DFG, the California Ocean Protection Council, other state and federal agencies, and private organizations involved with funding and supporting scientific research.

The MLPA Initiative is supporting DFG with the following tasks:

- Recruitment and selection of a panel of distinguished scientists
- Management support of the Panel to develop a priority list of baseline needs
- Development of a draft plan for data collection and organization to support adaptive management and monitoring and evaluation

Approach

Panel Members

The MLPA Initiative intends to recruit approximately nine nationally recognized technical experts with broad expertise in developing monitoring and evaluation systems. Members shall include individuals with expertise in applying science to marine policy and management and in implementing complex management policies.

The panel shall consist of marine scientists and economists and other social scientists with expertise in marine-related work, including some members of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team. Additionally, the following criteria will be applied when selecting panelists: 1) technical capability to cover the required disciplines; 2) objectivity, as reflected in the perceived willingness/ability to integrate diverse viewpoints; 3) ability to work collaboratively; 4) understanding of the various objectives related to measurement; 5) practical experience with on-the-ground use of measurement; 6) competence and comfortableness with analysis, storage, dissemination and use of measurement data; 7) availability to attend meetings and participate meaningfully; and 8) previous experience in applying science to public policy.

DFG will review the proposed panel and provide input to the MLPA Initiative on panel membership.

Staff Support

The panel's deliberations will be supported by a team consisting of Michael DeLapa, project manager; Evan Fox, technical support manager; and Rita Bunzel, communications and logistics support manager. Staff will support the panel with interim work products and production of a final report of the panel's findings. John Ugoretz, nearshore ecosystem / MLPA coordinator for DFG and other representatives of the department shall provide technical consultation and other support.

Process and Schedule

The panel will meet up to three times, twice in person and, if necessary, one or more times via teleconference. Small work groups may be assigned between meetings of the full panel. In all cases, materials shall be sent via email or made available through an FTP site.

Following is a tentative schedule of the meetings and meeting goals:

Meeting 1 - June 2006

- Agree on planning process and organization structure for the panel (described in this document)
- Review scope of project and agree on framing prioritized list of management questions in relation to the MLPA
- Translate management objectives into measurable scientific questions
- Assess feasibility and importance of scientific questions

Tasks in preparation for first meeting

- Develop preliminary list of management questions
- Vet list of questions with policy makers and stakeholders
- Distribute first draft list of management questions to panel

Meeting 2 - August 2006

- Confirm final list of management questions and related scientific questions
- Identify options for baseline data collection and other research projects that address questions
- Ballpark costs

Meeting 3 via teleconference - September or October 2006

- Refine costs
- Identify indicators that can be used to provide insight into questions
- Design, budget, and schedule data collection (experiments and monitoring) activities
- Prioritize data collection based on qualitative cost/benefit analysis

Meetings will not be open to the public in order to facilitate candid discussions about the merit of various scientific approaches and to avoid divisive debates about policy issues.

Techniques for establishing priorities

Although the hope is that the panel will reach a high level of agreement, it is not required to reach unanimous consensus. Rather, rank order polling and other voting methods will be used to help the panel prioritize various research efforts.

Deliverable

The panel's primary deliverable will be a final, written, prioritized list of baseline data needs for monitoring and adaptively managing MPAs within the MLPA Central Coast Study Region. This list will assist DFG, the California Ocean Protection Council, other state and federal agencies, and private organizations as they make decisions to support scientific research.

Conflict of Interest

The panel shall be established with an aim to avoid a real or perceived conflict of interest. In appointing the panel, significant efforts shall be made to ensure that there will be a majority of financially disinterested parties serving on the panel. A "financially disinterested party" is a member who does not currently receive or within the next five years intend to apply for funding to support research on the MLPA Central Coast Project.

In addition, the panel shall adhere to a conflict-of-interest policy. The purpose of this policy is to minimize both real and perceived conflicts of interest while maintaining the fullest possible involvement of knowledgeable scientists in providing scientific and technical advice to the program. A conflict of interest is a situation in which the interests (for example: personal, familial, professional or commercial) of a panelist involved in proposal development, evaluation, ranking, scheduling, or assessment processes have a real or perceived impact, either positive or negative, on the results of the related work. Conflict of interest depends on the situation, not the character or actions of the individual.

The conflict-of-interest policy is based on the following principles:

- Potential conflicts of interest will be declared at the start of every meeting, or at an otherwise appropriate time during the meeting.
- Panel members or other meeting attendees determined as having a conflict of interest regarding a proposal shall recuse themselves from deliberations and not be present when the proposal for which they have a conflict of interest is evaluated, considered for ranking, ranked, considered for scheduling, or scheduled. Proponents may be present for the general discussion of proposals (e.g., how proposals address management objectives).

Other

Panelists shall be reimbursed for travel, lodging, per diem, and related expenses consistent with expenditure guidelines established by the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force. In addition, panelists shall receive a \$250 honorarium for each full meeting in which they participate.